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THE SURVEY OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN CLEVELAND

It is announced that the complete Report of the Survey of Criminal Justice by the Cleveland Foundation in that city will appear about February 1st. This will be the first all-around survey of the subject attempted by any first-class city in this country. Its service is likely to be very great not only to Cleveland but to other cities, north, south, east and west. No one can read the volumes of the Survey without having a presumption established in his mind that other large cities of

the country are similarly conditioned and would be benefited by a like inquiry.

The Survey exhibits appropriate respect for the existing machinery of the law and its officers, both executive and judiciary. It is temperate, painstaking, and carefully analytical. Its recommendations are equally temperate and conservative, but they make clear that serious and widespread evils must be met by equally serious and comprehensive remedies.

The inquiry is but the first chapter in the history of Cleveland's attempt to handle the crime problem in terms of the twentieth century. A second commission, representing important business and other interests, has been formed to see that effect is given to the recommendations of the investigators and to note and report the results. This commission is no less important than the first. Its creation evidences the appreciation by the citizens of Cleveland of the difficulties of their task and of their determination to see it through successfully. Cleveland has already achieved a record of enterprise on the part of its Chamber of Commerce and other forces making for good government, and their follow-up attack on the crime problem gives further evidence of the courage and persistence that will not fail.

The main conclusions of the Cleveland Survey may be summarized. Though third in the order of reporting, the detection of crime is first in the order of thought and action. The disproportion between the number of crimes in this country and in England is indicated. For the year 1920, Cleveland, with approximately 800,000 inhabitants, had six times as many murders as London, with 8,000,000 inhabitants. There were 17 times as many robberies or assaults with intent to rob in Cleveland as in London that year. Comparisons between Liverpool and Glasgow and Cleveland were not less unfavorable to the last. That Cleveland was not worse than other leading cities was shown by Detroit, Chicago and St. Louis. Mr. Raymond B. Fosdick, who conducted the Police Survey, concludes that the volume of crime in Cleveland is proportionately neither much better nor worse than in other American cities, and that Cleveland's problem is the problem of America. Mr. Fosdick, viewing the subject as his broad study of the subject justifies, declares that police machinery in America has not developed the technique to cope with modern social conditions and that "clinging to old conditions, bound by old practices which business and industry long ago discarded, employing a personnel poorly adapted to its purpose, it grinds away on its perfunctory task without self-criticism, and with little initiative."

The investigation of prosecution by Alfred Bettman and the criminal courts by Reginald Heber Smith and Alfred Bettman shows that the machinery for handling the small percentage caught is not much better, if any, than that for their detection. In 100 state misdemeanor cases, 73 were found guilty and only 39 were sentenced. In 100 felony cases beginning in the municipal courts, only 37 were found guilty and of these only 15 were sentenced to the penitentiary or the reformatory. One wonders why many of those cases might not have been settled by the prosecuting attorney without being brought into court. One also wonders whether the judgment of the prosecuting attorney and the judge as to the defendants varied as much as is suggested by the fact that of 37 guilty of felonies only 15 were sentenced to state's prison. Would not the service of a Public Defender have secured more pleas of guilty and otherwise have reduced the number of cases brought to trial? The examiners of the criminal courts reach conclusions as to their administration similar to those of Mr. Fosdick as to the police. An obsolete and inadequate system of criminal justice, a rapidly growing city containing many nationalities, with the further problems of modern industrial life, and the absence of an informed and watchful public, were the findings of the investigators.

If, as is to be hoped, further surveys are made in leading cities and states in different parts of our country, there will doubtless be found notable and instructive variations in detail in the results. These results will be invaluable in the formation of new policies and new standards for the repression of criminality. We prophesy that all will combine to awaken this country to the conviction that our present disproportionate criminality is unnecessary and may be reduced in direct proportion to effort to improve the machinery of the criminal law, increase knowledge of its operation, and place our civic forces back of united effort to establish better protection of life and property.

JAMES BRONSON REYNOLDS.

ANNUAL PRISON CONGRESS

Last year's meeting of the American Prison Association was a review of its first half century's effort. That review demonstrated not only that the first fifty years are the hardest in the securing of higher standards and ideals in any field, but that a long pull, a strong and united pull, is still needed to reach the goal.